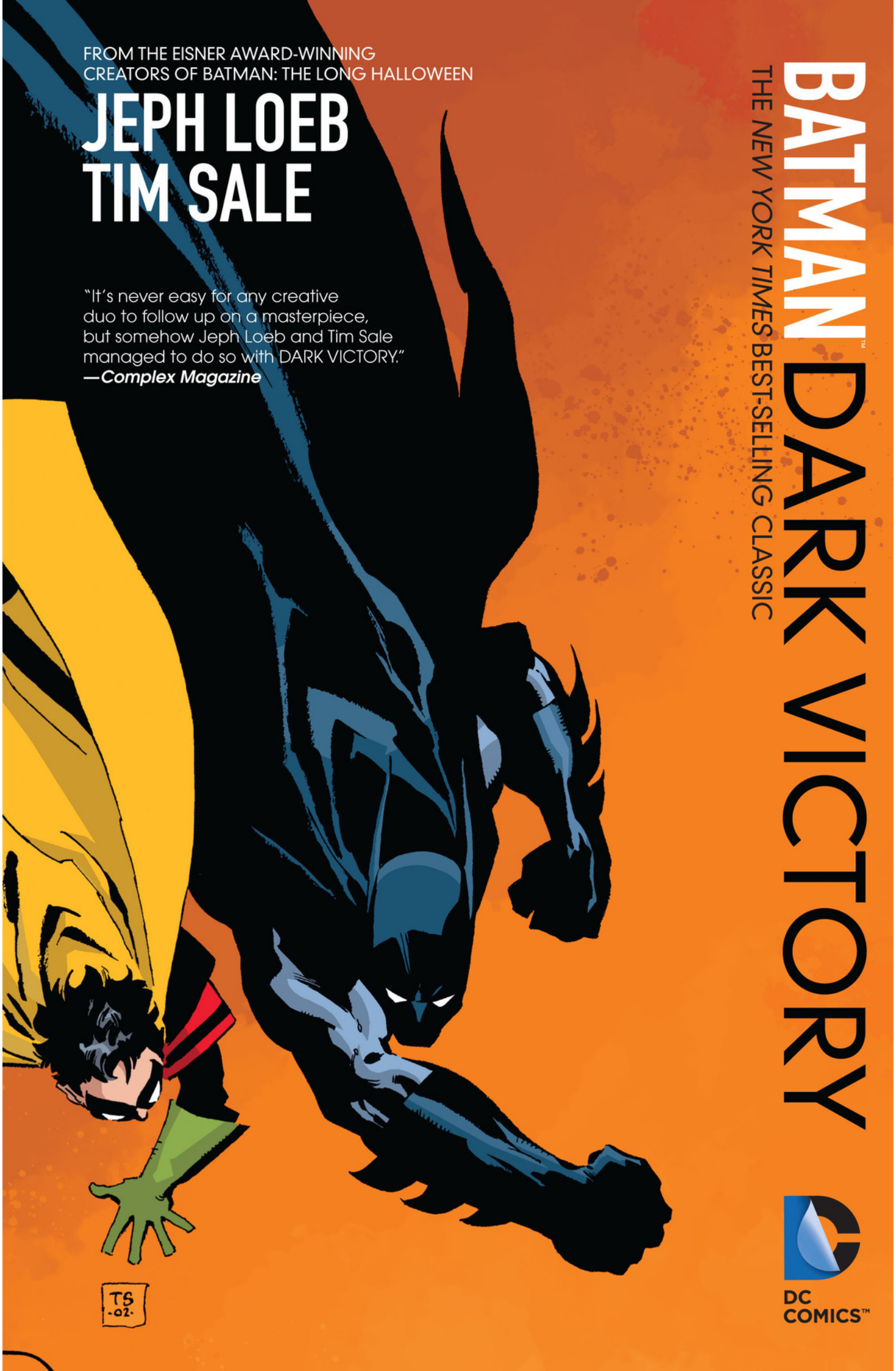
FROM THE EISNER AWARD-WINNING
CREATORS OF BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN

JEPH LOEB
TIM SALE

"It's never easy for any creative duo to follow up on a masterpiece, but somehow Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale managed to do so with DARK VICTORY."
—***Complex Magazine***

BATMAN™ DARK VICTORY

THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BEST-SELLING CLASSIC



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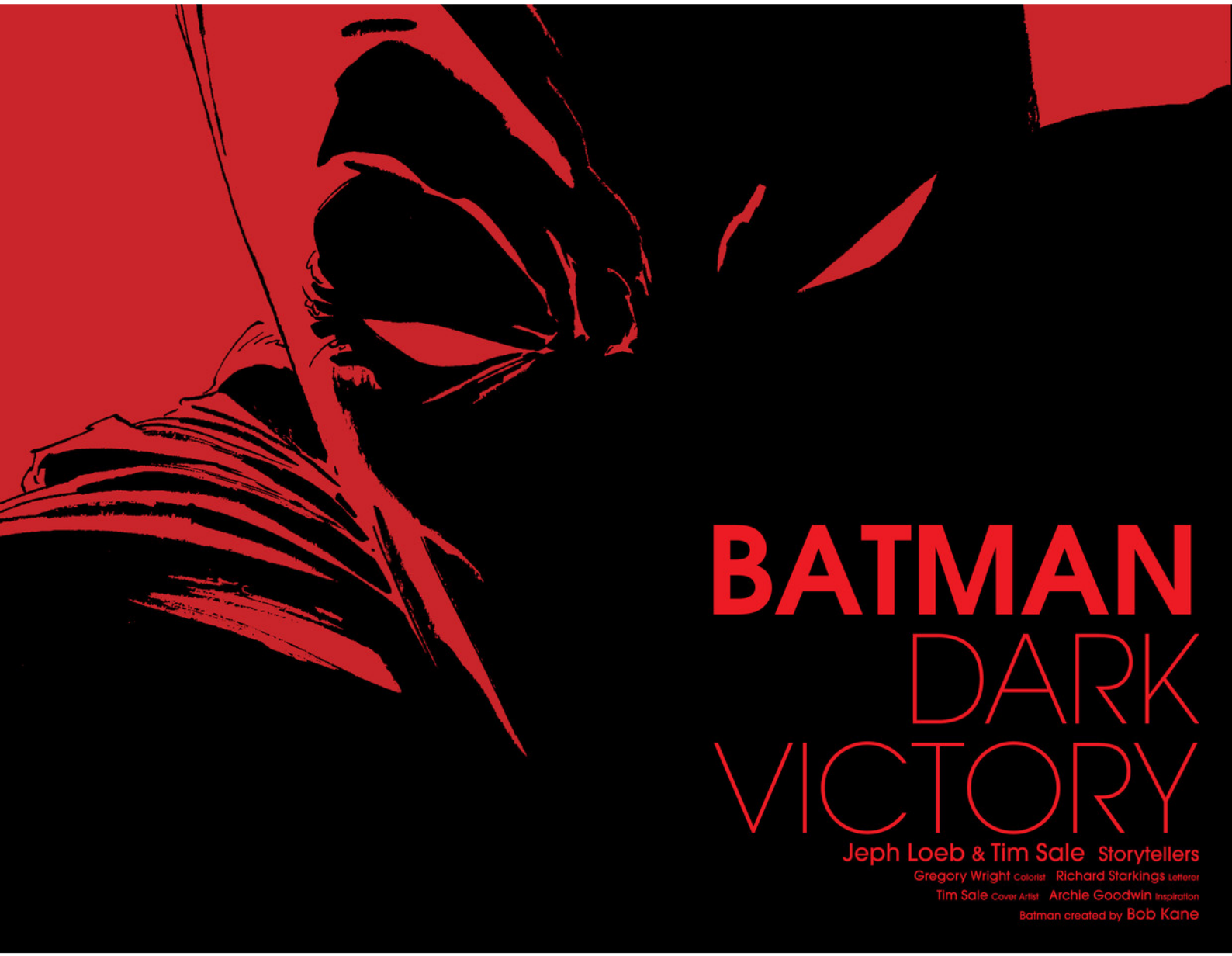
BATMAN DARK VICTORY


BATMAN
DARK
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Loeb, Jeph.
Batman : Dark Victory (new edition) / Jeph Loeb ; (illustrated by) Tim Sale.
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Summary: "Collecting BATMAN: DARK VICTORY #0-13, this epic continues the story of THE LONG HALLOWEEN. It is early in Batman's crimefighting career, when James Gordon, Harvey Dent, and the vigilante himself were all just beginning their roles as Gotham's protectors. Once a town controlled by organized crime, Gotham City suddenly finds itself being run by lawless freaks, such as Poison Ivy, Mr. Freeze, and the Joker. Witnessing his city's dark evolution, the Dark Knight completes his transformation into the city's greatest defender. He faces multiple threats, including the seeming return of a serial killer called Holiday. Batman's previous investigation of Holiday's killings revealed that more than one person was responsible for the murders. So the question remains: who is committing Holiday's crimes this time? And how many will die before Batman learns the truth?"-- Provided by publisher.
"Batman created by Bob Kane."

Welcome back. If you are reading this, you've likely read this book's forerunner, BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN. BATMAN: DARK VICTORY is the direct sequel to the classic Batman tale (sharing a title with the classic Bette Davis/Humphrey Bogart film). Taken together, the two books comprise one of the primary comic book influences for the Christopher Nolan films *Batman Begins*, *The Dark Knight*, and *The Dark Knight Rises*, which I co-wrote.

THE LONG HALLOWEEN and DARK VICTORY concern Batman's early years. In these stories, we see a youthful Jim Gordon who is portrayed as a contemporary and partner in crime of Batman's, rather than the stodgy, paternalistic character that was often depicted in previous incarnations. Both books focus on the friendship between Batman, Gordon, and Harvey Dent. In THE LONG HALLOWEEN, we witness Harvey's tragic fall from grace and transformation into Two-Face. In DARK VICTORY Batman and Gordon deal with the repercussions of Dent's fall.

Loeb and Sale posit a kind of benevolent conspiracy between Batman, Gordon, and Dent. The three men collude with one another in order to tame Gotham City. In the process, they break or bend a variety of laws and violate civil rights repeatedly. Do the ends justify the means? Does Gotham become a better place to live in? Not necessarily. It was that careful and complex examination of vigilantism that first attracted Chris Nolan and me to the books when preparing for the Batman films. We were interested in exploring the *cost* of Bruce Wayne's insane endeavor. Clearly, Jeph Loeb was as well.

One of the other elements that attracted us was the fact that Loeb essentially wrote a crime drama rather than a standard super-hero story. DARK VICTORY owes more to the *Godfather* films and various mob pictures than it does your standard cape-and-costume fare. Nolan and I also modeled *The Dark Knight* after a variety of crime film antecedents.

THE LONG HALLOWEEN and DARK VICTORY are also notable for their depiction of Batman as a detective. In the books, Loeb presents a pair of densely plotted mysteries. Fans and critics alike were appreciative of the effort, as the detective aspect is one that comic book creators (and filmmakers!) often give short shrift. Loeb took his time creating these stories, and it shows in the final work. There are many surprises not the least of which is the ultimate turn taken by District Attorney Janice Porter.

On a story level, one of the other elements that I found provocative was the relationship between Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle. Again, it was complex. Extremely twisted. Other writers have delved into their relationship before, but I've always been partial to the way Loeb writes these two. One exchange in DARK VICTORY perfectly sums up just how dysfunctional they truly are:

Catwoman has come to warn Batman that his friend Harvey Dent is in danger. Batman replies: "He's not my friend any longer."

Catwoman slaps Batman's face *twice*. "Isn't there anything left inside of you?" Batman just takes the slaps, only stopping her as she moves in for a third slap.

The answer, of course, is that there *isn't* anything left inside of Batman. Or, at least, precious little. What was once there has been eaten up by the aforementioned *cost* of trying to right the sinking ship that is Gotham.

Batman's guilt is central to DARK VICTORY. It's also interesting to note that Bruce Wayne barely figures in the story at all. That's because Bruce's humanity is slowly dying away. When Harvey Dent fell, he took Bruce with him. That's a notion that Chris Nolan and I were also interested in exploring in the Batman films.

I've devoted a number of paragraphs to Loeb's writing. But you can't talk about the writing without devoting a paragraph to the superb art in DARK VICTORY as well. Tim Sale is a frequent collaborator of Loeb's. For my money, he's the single *best* Batman artist out there. His work is dark and expressive, using lots of contrast. Between THE LONG HALLOWEEN and DARK VICTORY, Tim's artwork really matured (at least to my eye). The panels are bolder, the composition and use of blacks more confident.

I would also be remiss if I didn't comment on Gregory Wright's masterly colors. He employs a restricted palette throughout the story, occasionally using near monochromatic color washes to illustrate key moments (like the opening of Chapters 7 and 9).

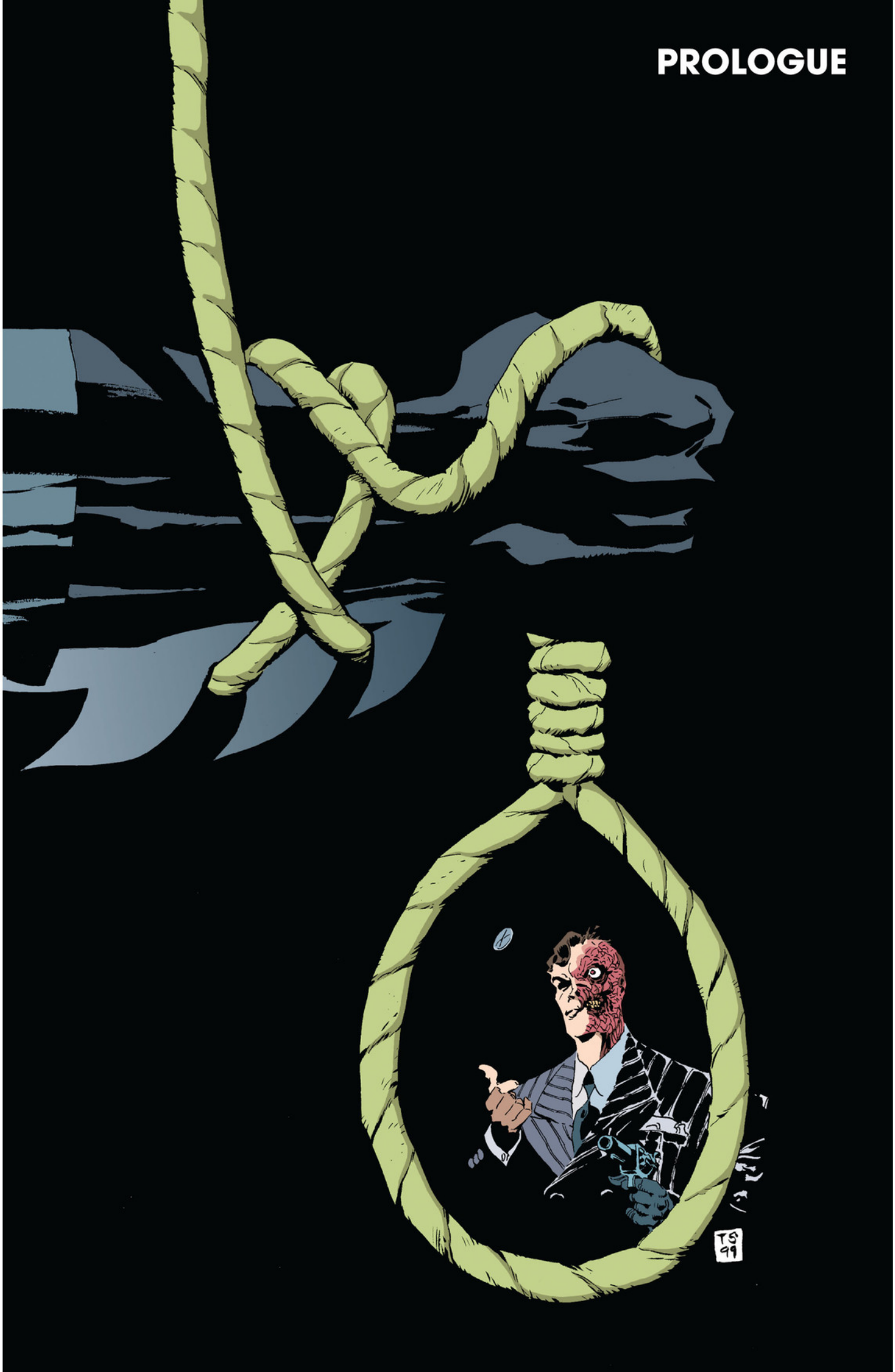
I have to say, I much prefer reading BATMAN: DARK VICTORY as a complete graphic novel, rather than as a handful of discrete chapters.

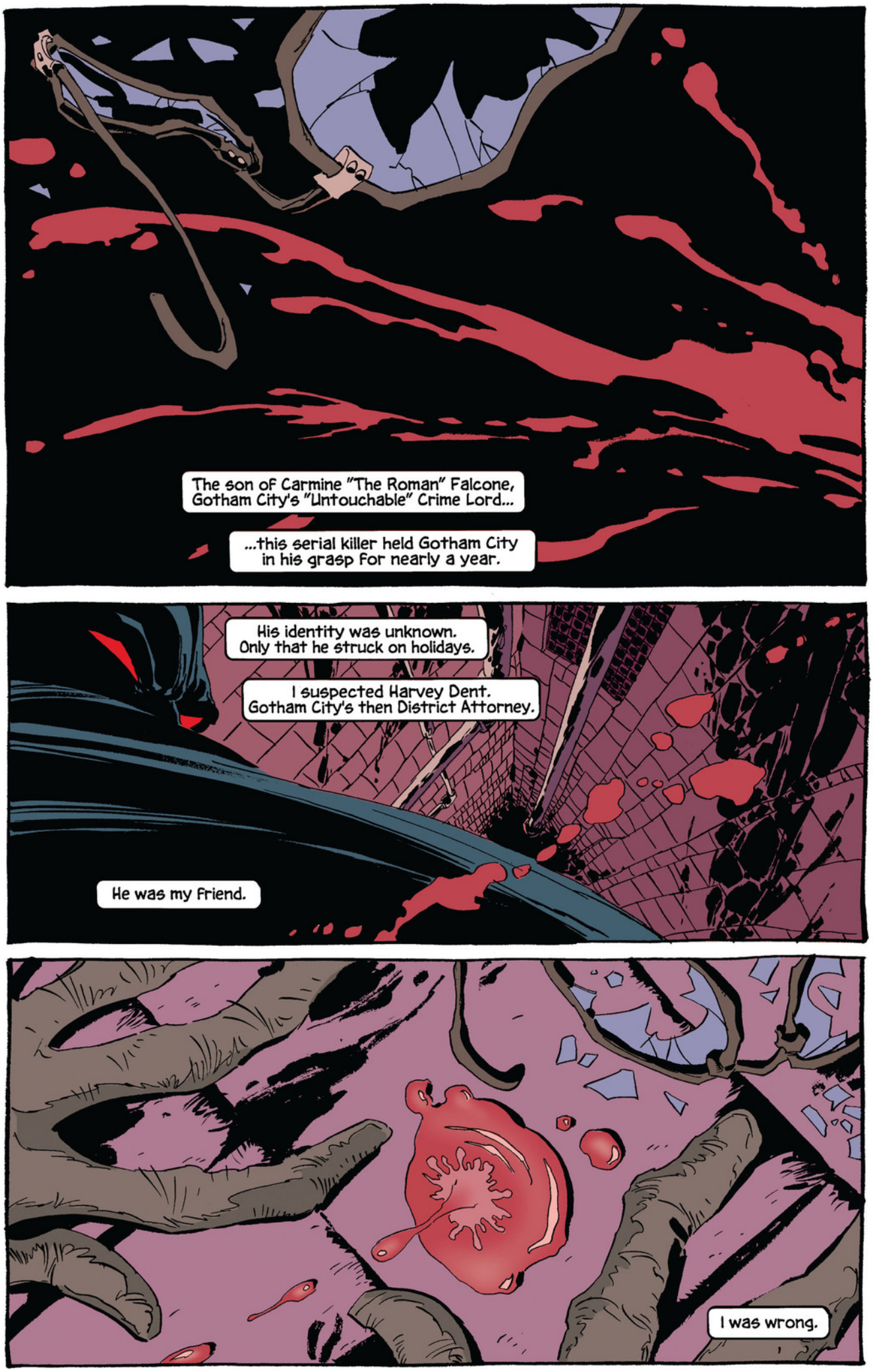
Enjoy.

— David S. Goyer
December 27, 2011

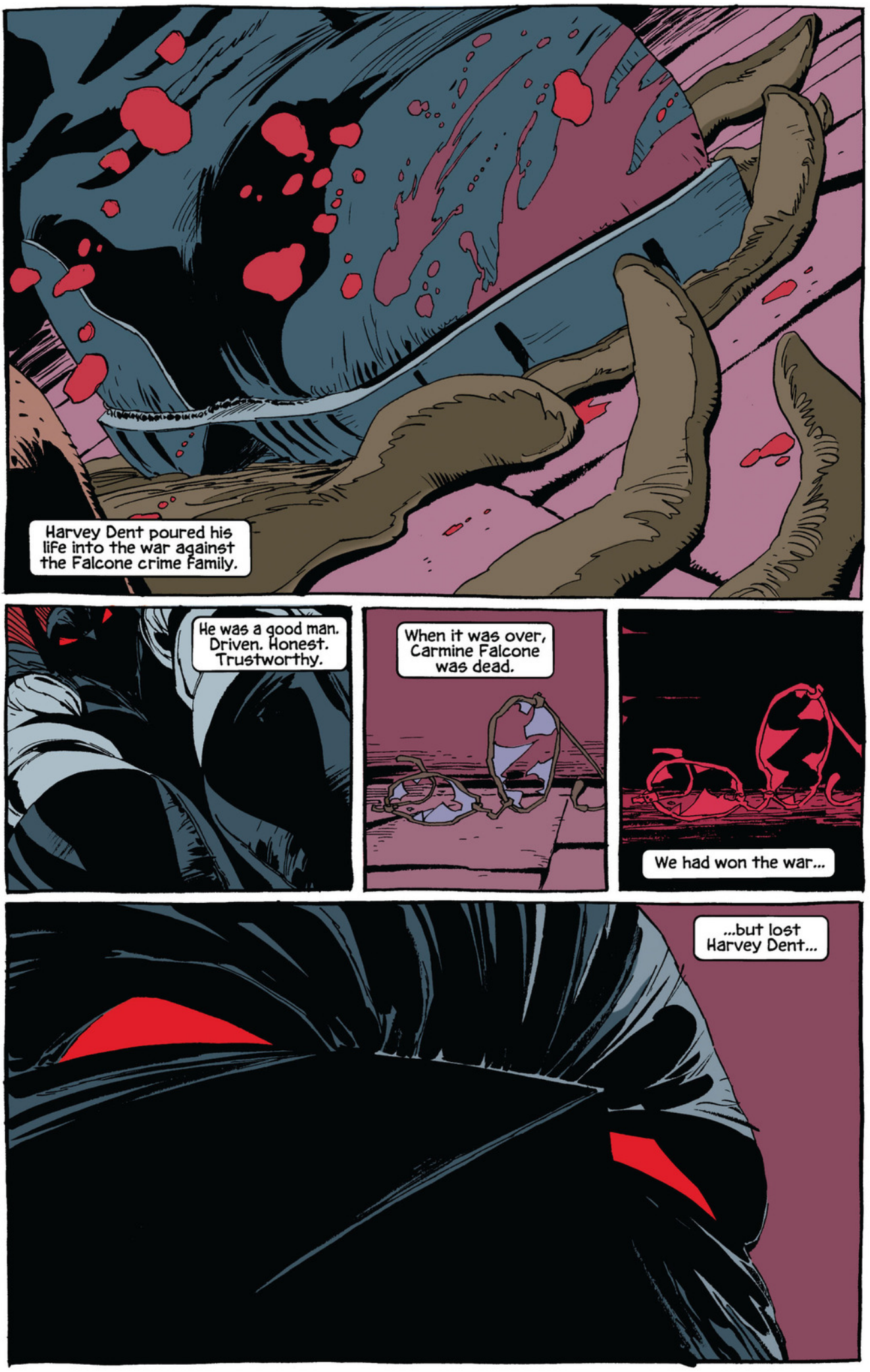
David S. Goyer is a filmmaker, video game writer, and novelist. His films include the *Blade* trilogy, *Batman Begins*, *The Dark Knight*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, and *Man of Steel*. For the video game world, he co-wrote the story for *Call of Duty: Black Ops*.

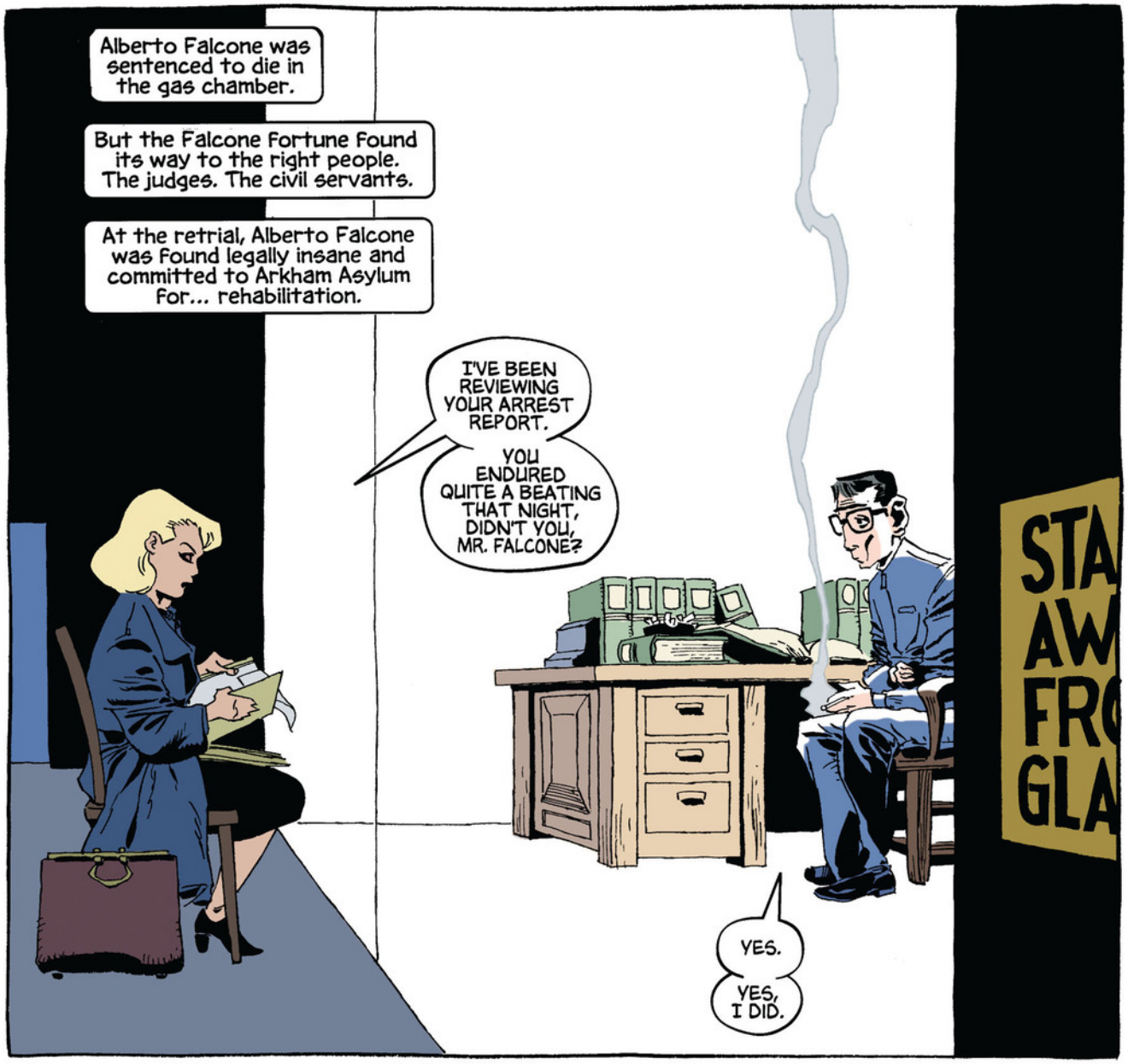
PROLOGUE

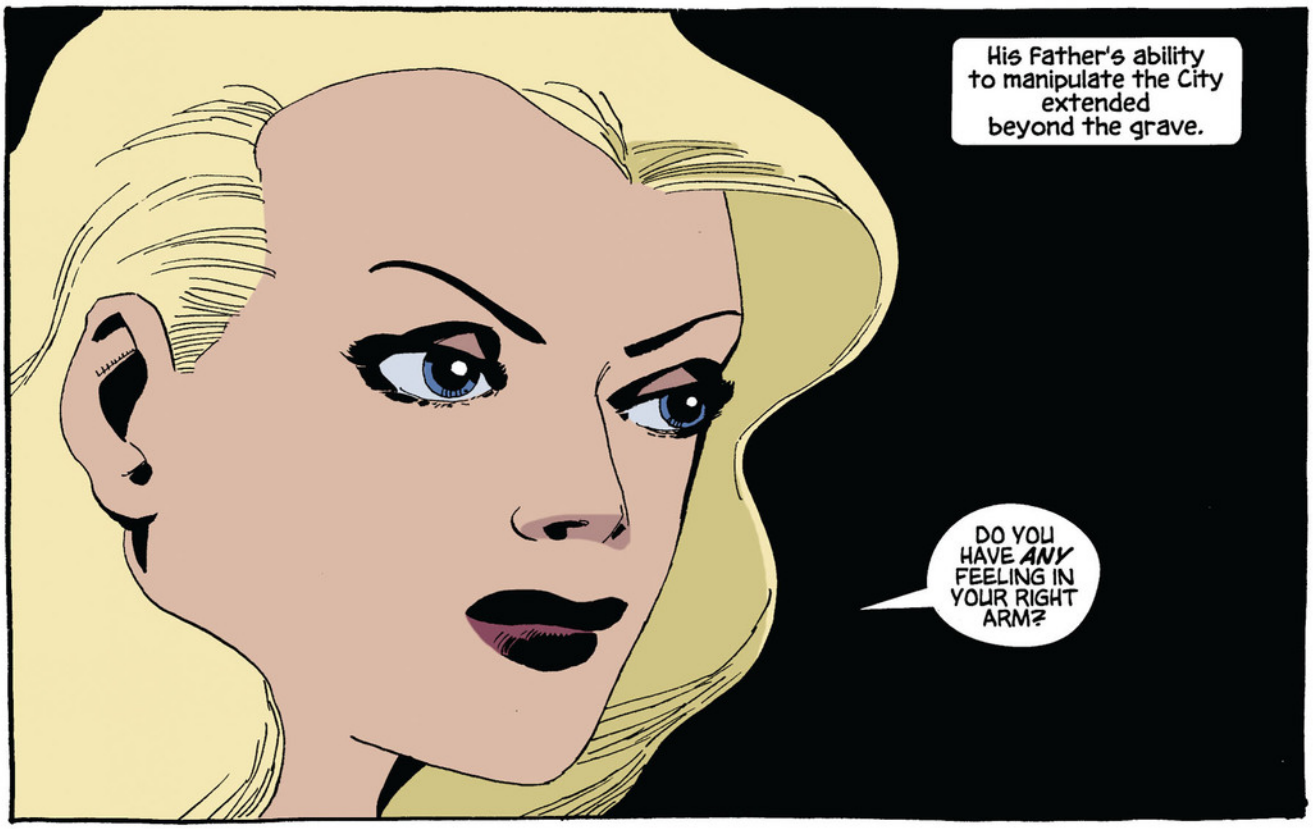


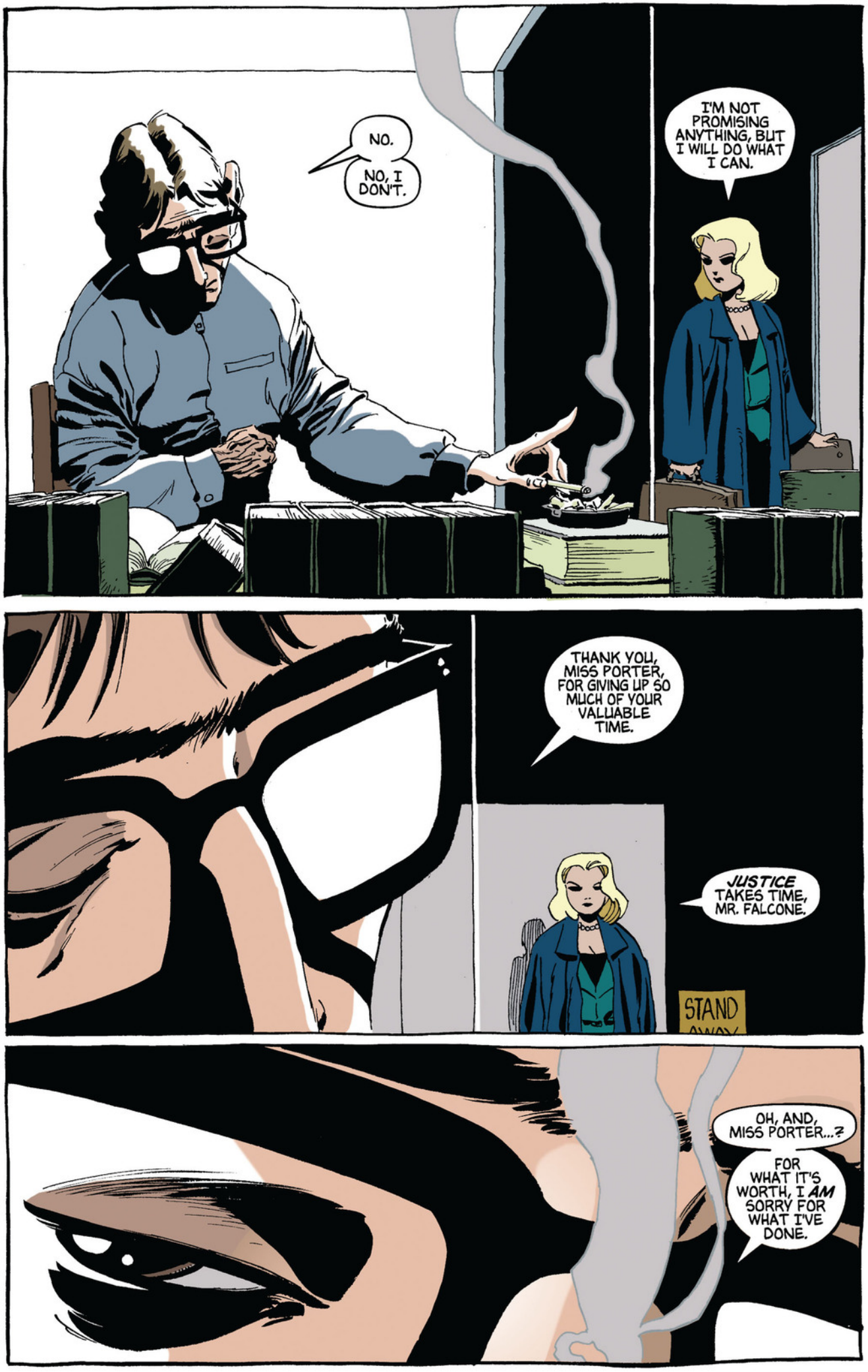

The son of Carmine "The Roman" Falcone, Gotham City's "Untouchable" Crime Lord...
...this serial killer held Gotham City in his grasp for nearly a year.
His identity was unknown. Only that he struck on holidays.
I suspected Harvey Dent. Gotham City's then District Attorney.
He was my friend.
I was wrong.

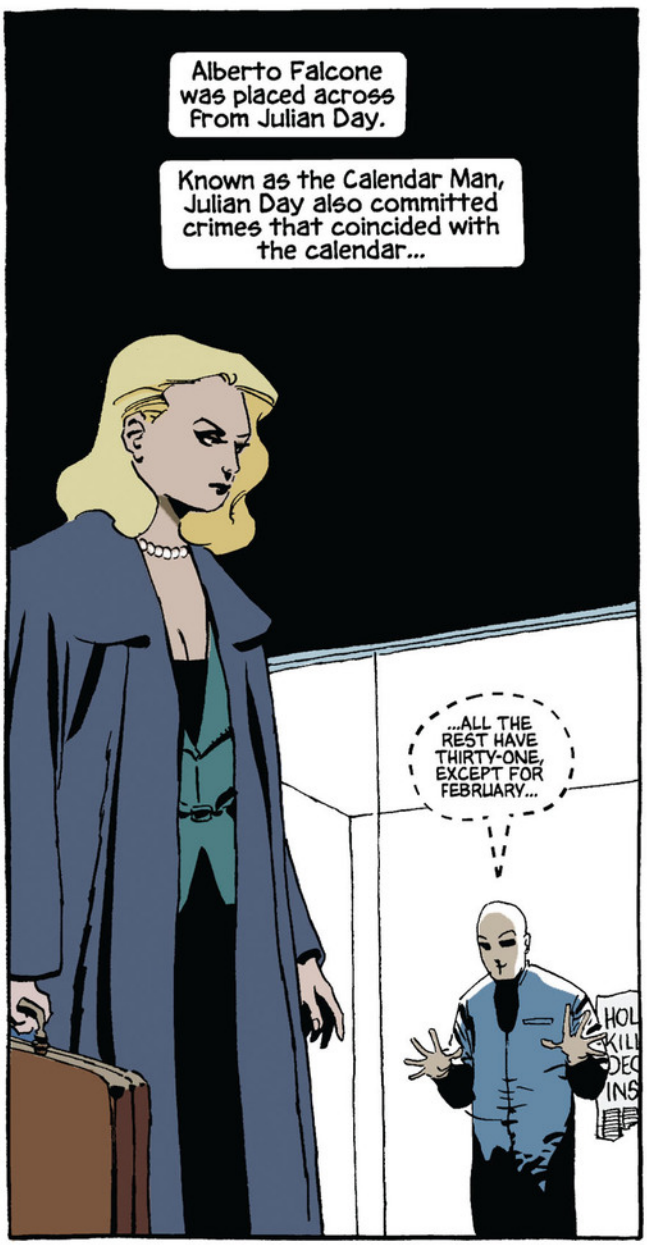
Alberto Falcone was Holiday.


Harvey Dent poured his life into the war against the Falcone crime family.
He was a good man. Driven. Honest. Trustworthy.
When it was over, Carmine Falcone was dead.
We had won the war...
...but lost Harvey Dent...


Alberto Falcone was sentenced to die in the gas chamber.
But the Falcone fortune found its way to the right people. The judges. The civil servants.
At the retrial, Alberto Falcone was found legally insane and committed to Arkham Asylum for... rehabilitation.
I'VE BEEN REVIEWING YOUR ARREST REPORT.
YOU ENDURED QUITE A BEATING THAT NIGHT, DIDN'T YOU, MR. FALCONE?
YES.
YES, I DID.

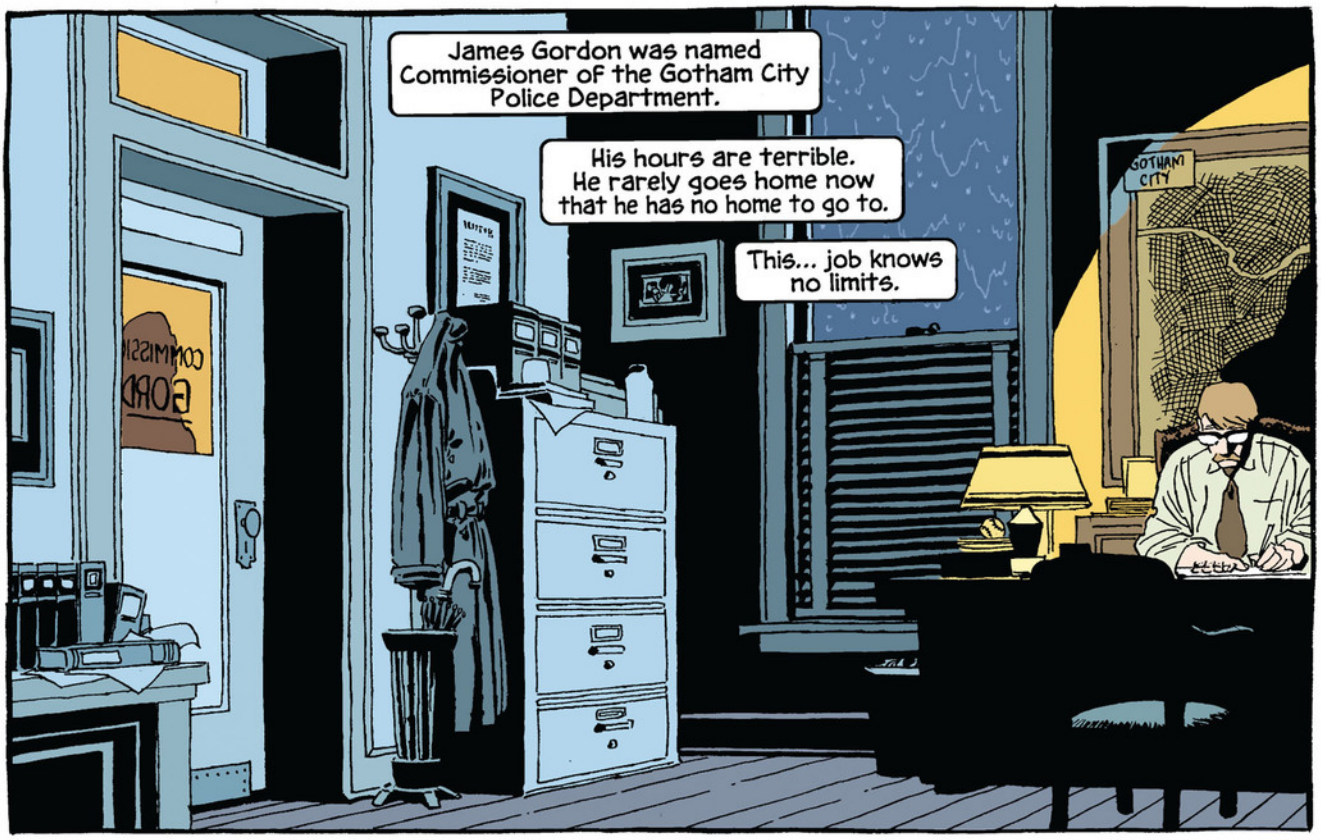

His father's ability to manipulate the City extended beyond the grave.
DO YOU HAVE *ANY* FEELING IN YOUR RIGHT ARM?


NO.
NO, I DON'T.
I'M NOT PROMISING ANYTHING, BUT I WILL DO WHAT I CAN.
THANK YOU, MISS PORTER, FOR GIVING UP SO MUCH OF YOUR VALUABLE TIME.
JUSTICE TAKES TIME, MR. FALCONE.
STAND
OH, AND, MISS PORTER...?
FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I AM SORRY FOR WHAT I'VE DONE.


Alberto Falcone was placed across from Julian Day.
Known as the Calendar Man, Julian Day also committed crimes that coincided with the calendar...
...ALL THE REST HAVE THIRTY-ONE, EXCEPT FOR FEBRUARY...

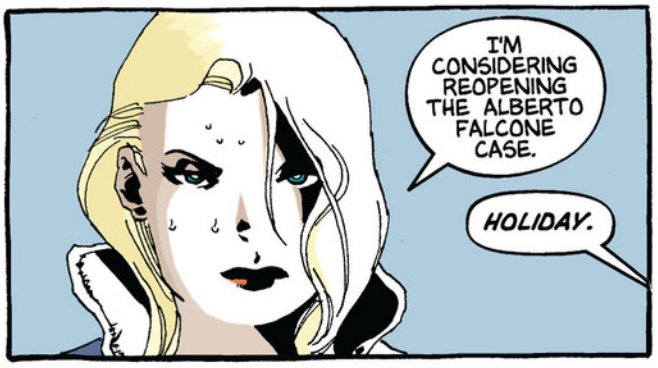
...but with far less... notoriety...
FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, MISS PORTER...
...I'M SORRY, TOO.

STAND AWAY FROM GLASS

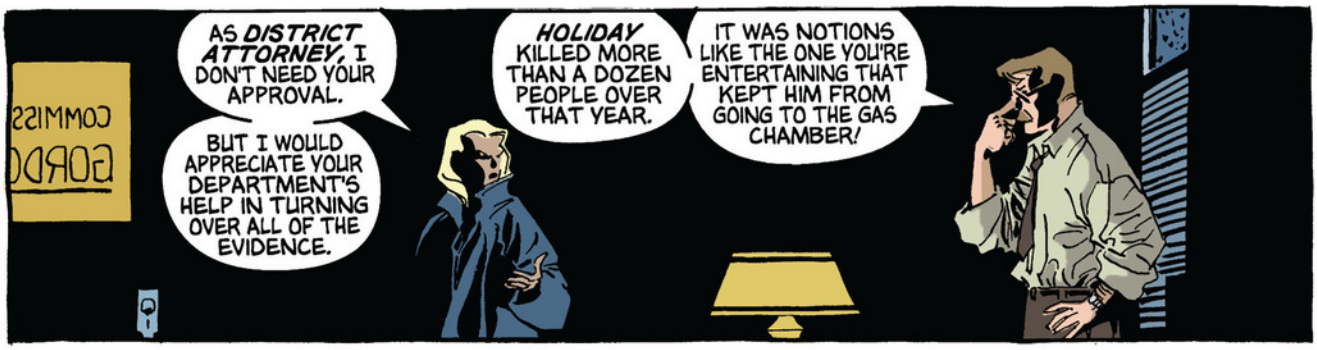

James Gordon was named Commissioner of the Gotham City Police Department.
His hours are terrible. He rarely goes home now that he has no home to go to.
This... job knows no limits.
GOTHAM CITY

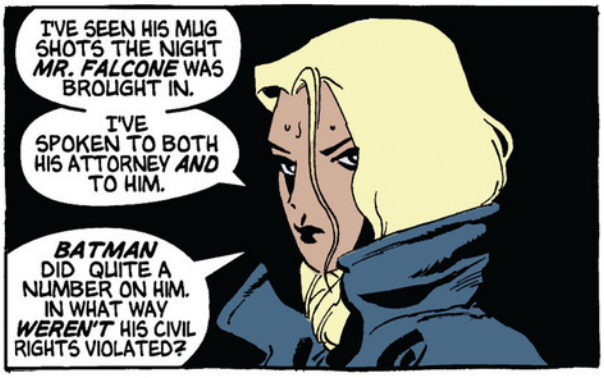
I'VE JUST COME FROM ARKHAM.
BUSINESS OR PLEASURE?

YOU DON'T LIKE ME VERY MUCH, DO YOU, JIM?
...JANICE...
...IT'S LATE. I'M TIRED. AND SOMETIMES I SAY THINGS I SHOULDN'T. SO...
...YOU WENT TO ARKHAM, AND...?

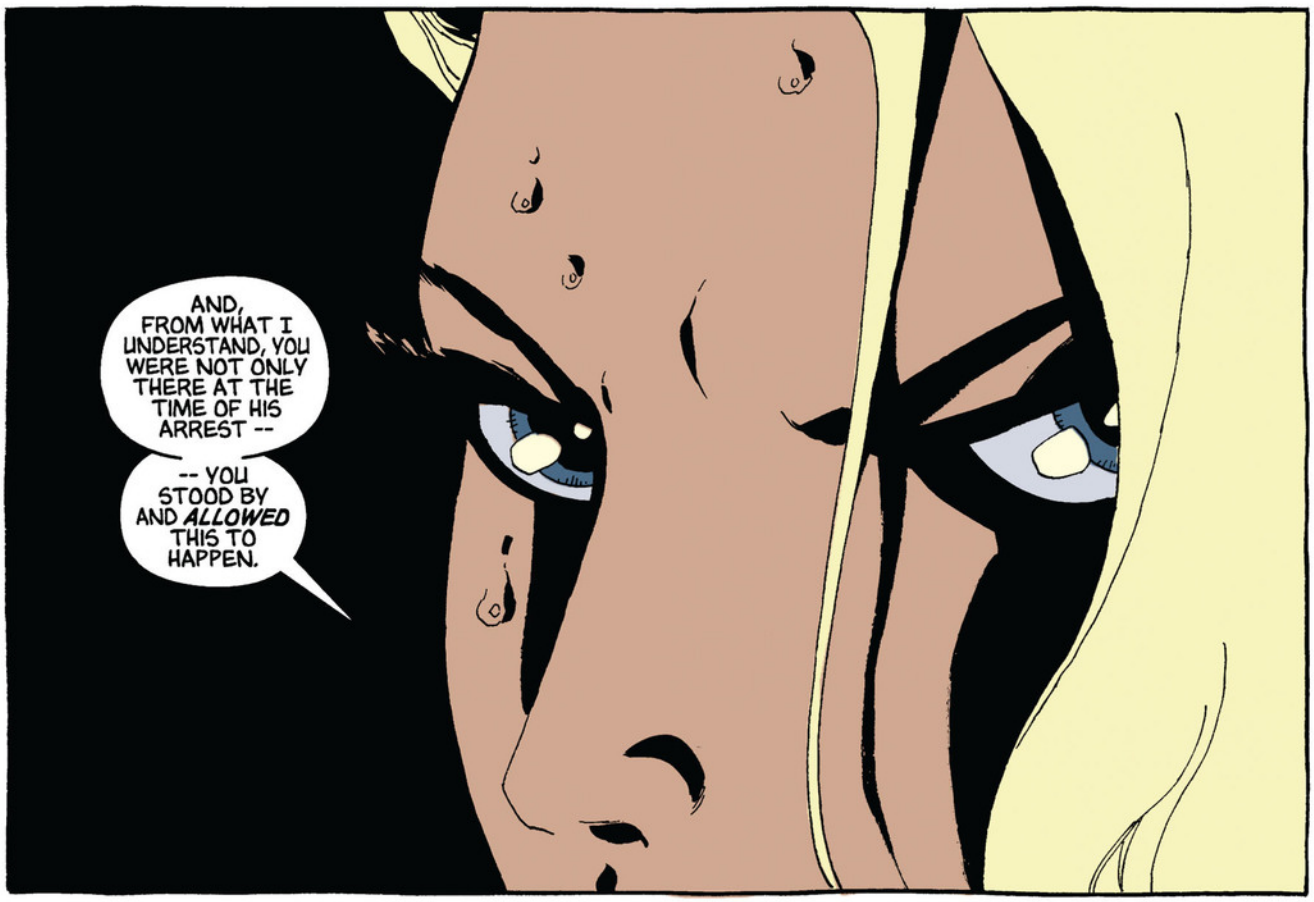

I'M CONSIDERING REOPENING THE ALBERTO FALCONE CASE.
HOLIDAY.

AND I DON'T THINK THAT WOULD BE A VERY GOOD IDEA.


AS DISTRICT ATTORNEY, I DON'T NEED YOUR APPROVAL.
BUT I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR DEPARTMENT'S HELP IN TURNING OVER ALL OF THE EVIDENCE.
HOLIDAY KILLED MORE THAN A DOZEN PEOPLE OVER THAT YEAR.
IT WAS NOTIONS LIKE THE ONE YOU'RE ENTERTAINING THAT KEPT HIM FROM GOING TO THE GAS CHAMBER!


I'VE SEEN HIS MUG SHOTS THE NIGHT MR. FALCONE WAS BROUGHT IN.
I'VE SPOKEN TO BOTH HIS ATTORNEY AND TO HIM.
BATMAN DID QUITE A NUMBER ON HIM. IN WHAT WAY WEREN'T HIS CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATED?

GOTHAM CITY


AND, FROM WHAT I UNDERSTAND, YOU WERE NOT ONLY THERE AT THE TIME OF HIS ARREST --
-- YOU STOOD BY AND ALLOWED THIS TO HAPPEN.

YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE.

I DON'T THINK SO.

GOTHAM CITY

SHE'S GOING TO DO THIS. THAT'S HER REPUTATION -- TO BE THE BULL IN A CHINA SHOP.
I CAN'T WORK WITH HER OFFICE LIKE I COULD WITH --
-- LIKE I DID BEFORE.

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN PROTECT YOU ON THIS ONE.

THAT WON'T BE --
-- AND NEVER WAS --
-- NECESSARY.

I... I MISS HIM.

DON'T.

HOW CAN YOU BE SO COLD-HEARTED?
HE WAS MY FRIEND. I GOT DRUNK WITH HIM. WE PLAYED CARDS UNTIL FOUR IN THE MORNING.
NO MATTER WHAT HE'S BECOME, HARVEY WAS YOUR FRIEND, TOO...
It was on a night like this that I ran to my father. The thunder and lightning rumbled through the house.
Instead of comforting me, he held me at arm's length.
BATMAN...?
"You will be stronger if you learn to stand on your own," was all he said.
GOTHAM CITY
DAMN...
This storm that rages in Gotham City tonight...
...is only the beginning...
LOEB SALE 1999